



National Climatic Data Center Online Document Library (NCDC) FAQs

More information can be found in the [Passworded Databases](#) FDLP Desktop article.

How can I access the National Climatic Data Center Online Document Library (NCDC) database?

There are two methods of access for this database. Libraries may request a username and password through the [askGPO](#) system. Per the Terms of Agreement listed in the [Passworded Databases](#) FDLP Desktop article, this password may not be handed out or emailed to library users. Library users must be logged in by library staff.

The other method of access is for libraries that have a .gov, .edu, .k12, .mil, and .us email extension or network domain. In order for this access to work, libraries must meet certain technical specifications. See below for more information.

Can I embed the username and password within a script and mask it behind a screen icon so my library users just have to click on an icon to gain access to the database?

Yes, libraries are permitted to put the username and password in a script, provided that:

- * The username and password is not visible to the user
- * The username and password is not visible in the Web page's source code
- * The script does not invite any unsolicited email or automatic downloads to the NOAA system.

Technical Specifications for Access without a Username and Password

Free depository access without a password to the NCDC requires using reverse Domain Name System (DNS) lookup. If the domain of the computer being used resolves back to NOAA's reverse DNS lookup system as a user from a .gov, .edu, .k12, .mil, or a .us, your computer will be allowed access into the database. Your network administrator will need to verify that the computer being used to access the NCDC resolves to a domain name and not just an IP address.

To see if your computer meets the technical specifications, click on the following [NOAA Reverse DNS Lookup](#). This link will tell you how NOAA's computers see the IP address and domain name for the computer.

Correct Setup Using NOAA's Reverse DNS Lookup **IP Address:** 123.45.678.901

Host Name: jdoe.ncdc.noaa.gov

Incorrect Setup Using NOAA's Reverse DNS Lookup **IP Address:** 123.45.678.901

Host Name: 123.45.678.901

The domain is not resolving to a .gov, .edu, .k12, .mil, or a .us. If you are having problems getting free data from the NCDC website, please make sure that you or your DNS administrator check for the following. In most cases, fixing one or both of the items below resolves any issues when trying to access free online data.

- 1) The IP address that you have configured on your computer must have a DNS "A" or



"Address" record.

2) The name that is associated with your IP address must have a PTR or "pointer record" that points back to the SAME IP address in the "A" record.

Show these requirements to your system/DNS administrator, who should then be able to implement any necessary system changes.

What if my institution cannot meet the technical specifications listed?

If your institution is unable or unwilling to make a DNS "A" record and appropriate PTR record, then your library must use the FDLP issued username and password for free depository access to the NDCD. You can request your depository library's username and password in the [skGPO](#) system.

What data can I get for free?

There are two types of data that can be accessed for free by depository libraries: Publications and Form Generated Products.

Publications: The publications must be accessed through the [NDCD - Image and Publications System](#). To access these publications click on the title of the publication.

Form Generated Products: Access to the following data products is granted through the online store:

- * [Unedited Local Climatological Data](#) (ULCD data available prior to Jan 2005),
- * [Quality Controlled Local Climatological Data](#) (QCLCD data available Jan 2005 to present),
- * [COOP/Record of Climatological Observation](#) (various date ranges available),
- * [Annual Climatological Summary](#) (various date ranges available),
- * Digital ASCII files from the [Climate Data Online System](#) (CDO, various date ranges available)

Although access to Form Generated Products is through the online store, if you log in with the username and password, or if your library's domain resolves correctly, you should never see a button asking you to "Add to Shopping Cart."

Instead, you will be provided links to access the data you have selected.